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Title of Document: Central Office Telephone Call Coverage Backup Policy

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Applicability: Central Office

The language used in this policy does not create an employment contract between the employee and the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN). SCDDSN reserves the right to revise the contents of this policy, in whole or in part.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to document the Department's policy, regarding the proper procedures to be followed by all Central Office employees relative to answering telephones and providing for incoming telephone call coverage during normal business hours within each Division and Section.

USE

The manner and efficiency in which incoming telephone calls are answered and processed is basic to providing a quality level of service to both internal and external customers of each Division and Section within Central Office. When an incoming call is allowed to ring 3 times on the original instrument, then 3 times at the two backup coverage points, and then roll to the receptionist, the caller will have experienced a wait time of 10 or more rings. Most callers will have hung up by this time or, if they were patient enough to hang on, will generally be in a less positive frame of mind as a result of the delayed answering of their phone call. The other problem that this causes is that the caller has not made contact with the Division or Section they were attempting to call and the receptionist either forwards their call again adding to the caller's frustrations or takes a message which must be picked up at the receptionist's desk further delaying the calling party's communication.

POLICY

Each Division and Section within Central Office is responsible for answering incoming telephone calls to their area and must provide coverage within their Section or Division during all normal business hours, Monday through Friday. Incoming calls should not be allowed to ring through to the Receptionist. Every effort should be made within the Divisions and Sections to avoid this situation. When a call does ring through to the Receptionist, it should be only because all telephones within the Division or Section were busy. The Receptionist's primary functions are to greet and direct visitors and screen and direct incoming calls from outside the agency. The

answering of "ring through" calls from within Central Office by the Receptionist should be an **extremely rare** occurrence.

Each employee also has a responsibility, when they leave their desk for an extended period of time, to forward their phones, using the "send all calls" function, within their Section, Division, or to an adjoining or nearby office so that the first three (3) rings will not unnecessarily delay the incoming call from being answered in a responsive and timely manner. When the employee returns to his/her desk, the phone forwarding instruction must then be canceled.

Employees should also help answer ringing telephones in their area, by using the call pickup feature, when they are aware that a telephone is not going to be answered by the intended recipient.

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